DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 396 415 EA 027 644

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TITLE Creating Caring Communities: What It Takes To Make Real Change in Real Schools.
PUB DATE Apr 96
NOTE 19p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New York, NY, April 8-12, 1996).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Education; Inservice Education; Program Development; Program Implementation; *Resistance to Change; *Staff Development
IDENTIFIERS *White Plains School System NY

ABSTRACT

Two elementary schools in White Plains, New York, have been involved in the Child Development Project (CDP) since 1991. This paper describes how the staffs and administrators built caring communities into their schools. The paper is written from the perspective of a staff developer who became a district coordinator for staff development. The paper describes several staff issues involved in bringing about school change: (1) how to convince staff members who think they already have a caring community that there is a need to change or examine practices; (2) how to engage a staff that acknowledges the need for a caring community but disagrees with CDP's methods for organizing one; (3) how to help staff members who do not see the connection between building community and advancing the academic, social, and ethical development of students to consider another perspective; and (4) how to help people look beyond the individual parts of the program and consider the larger picture. Mechanisms that supported the change included CDP's strong, well-developed model, a critical mass of staff who agreed to try CDP, massive staff development, strong principal support, the development of local expertise, district support, new teacher orientation in CDP, parent education, and recognition of positive changes for students and teachers. Obstacles included time, money, competing interests for teachers' energy, institutionalized structures that interfered with teachers' adult learning, lack of trust among staff, and resisters. (LMI)

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Creating Caring Communities: What It Takes to Make Real Change in Real Schools

Paper Presented at AERA Annual Meeting, New York, April 11, 1996

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Participating in the Child Development Project (CDP) has been one of the highlights of my career in education. I have had the opportunity to have some of my beliefs about how to teach children validated. It has been my good fortune to see both children and adults think deeply about how to treat each other and then act on those beliefs. I have been part of a community of thoughtful, talented, caring adults who spent many hours working and struggling together on the Implementation Team to make CDP a reality in two schools. It has been difficult work but it has been rewarding because we have had many opportunities to share and be reflective about our practice There have been positive changes for students and adults in both schools. Although this story of change is told from my perspective, I included the voices of my colleagues. They are the ones who played significant roles in creating the changes discussed in this paper. One colleague expresses the change she has experienced:

> *Over the past three years, CDP has made me sensitive to some of the things I simply took for granted. It has helped me articulate some things I really cared about but never could articulate. It has helped me make transparent some of the things that I had always tried to do but never made transparent to myself or to the children. It has changed my teaching and will always have changed my teaching, no matter what. It has given me an opportunity to really examine my teaching.*

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Creating Caring Communities:
What It Takes to Make Real Change in Real Schools

Two elementary schools in White Plains, George Washington and Ridgeway, have been involved with the Child Development Project (CDP) for the past five years as program schools. During that time, I have been involved in several capacities. Initially, as a staff developer for effective teaching, I participated in the ten day training session held in California with nine other staff members from our district. During the following year, I worked in a third grade teacher's classroom on a regular basis as I learned the materials and components of CDP. During the 1992-93 school year, I spent one day per week at Ridgeway working as a CDP staff developer. I worked with teachers co-planning lessons, doing demonstration lessons, locating materials, and doing whatever was necessary to provide support as teachers began implementing CDP in their classrooms. In 1993-94, when I became the coordinator of staff development, the role of district coordinator of CDP was added to my new job. I have served as a member of the CDP Implementation Team since the project began in White Plains. I have been intimately involved in the Child Development Project since the summer of 1991, when the dissemination effort began.

As I look at how we went about building community in the two schools, I will be drawing upon my various roles. I will describe some of the changes that have taken place in the schools based on my observations and those of my colleagues. As I describe the changes, I will include the difficulties encountered and the struggles mounted to deal with them. Finally, I will raise the questions and concerns we have about our next steps.

Participation in the Child Development Project is a journey, as the members of the Developmental Studies Center (DSC) are so fond of saying. For me, it has been a long, arduous, personally and professionally exciting, invigorating journey! There have been peaks, valleys, and periods of

traveling through the desert before finally reaching an oasis. I remember when my journey began in the summer of 1991.

Eric Schaps, Executive Director of the Developmental Studies Center, had made several presentations in White Plains and two schools had decided to embark upon the CDP journey. I was a staff developer in the district and the superintendent, Saul Yanofsky, had convinced me to participate in this project. It meant attending the ten day training session in Berkeley, California during the summer. I had heard Eric's presentations, and I was intrigued by the project's premise: building a caring community of learners in order to enhance the intellectual, ethical, and social development of elementary school students.

The project would span four years and the staff development would be intense and ongoing. There would be annual summer training, in addition to week long visits by staff developers four times during the year. It was a school-wide effort, materials would be provided, and we would be part of a dissemination effort involving six school districts from around the country. How could I turn this down? It had real possibilities! The massive staff development effort was dear to my heart and I agreed with the basic principles of CDP as I understood them. I liked and respected the other people in White Plains who were going to be involved in the summer training (teachers, principals, the superintendent and an assistant superintendent), and I would get to spend ten days near San Francisco. What's not to like? I did have a few questions about some of the details concerning how this would work once we returned to White Plains and exactly what I would be expected to do. However, I decided to put my need for specifics on hold and begin my journey.

The ten days of immersion in the theory and practice of CDP was a learning experience. We were given a lot of information, but from the very beginning, we were taught in the way we were expected to work with students and our colleagues. We participated in unity builders so community could be built within the district teams and across districts. In order to construct our own meaning from all the information we received, there were many opportunities to think and talk about beliefs and practice, in addition to working in partnerships and cooperative groups. There was time for reading and reflecting individually as well as in small groups. We were also given opportunities to respond to ideas in a creative manner, using such forms as art, music, or drama. Essentially,

information was presented in a variety of formats and we had options for how we learned and responded. We also had the chance to begin sharing our newly acquired knowledge in small groups and then in larger groups, but always in a supportive environment. The DSC staff guided us in establishing a community of learners and modeled behaviors for us as both teachers and learners. They laid the foundation for our work together over the rest of our four year journey.

As a participant, I quickly realized that what we were talking and reading about was much deeper that what I had expected. This wasn't the usual program which teaches a particular set of skills, offers some lessons for students, supplies 5-10 days of training and then sends the participants off to spread the word, with no further involvement. The Child Development Project was asking teachers to rethink the ways they approached teaching and learning. Teachers would be expected to collaborate in a culture that did not support or promote teachers talking to each other about the serious issues of education. Most teachers work in isolation and often in competition with each other. Collaboration is <u>not</u> the norm! Teachers were being asked to examine their beliefs about such topics as rewards and punishments, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, and honoring the knowledge children bring to school with them even if it differed from their cultural and class expectations.

I was serving in a dual role. I was a participant/learner and a staff developer/teacher. As a participant, I found the learning challenging, exciting, and intellectually stimulating. As a staff developer, I experienced sheer terror. I had taught for twenty years and my belief system meshed with what CDP espoused about how to treat children and provide an engaging curriculum for them. After all, I had held class meetings, taught Social Problem Solving (SPS), worked with the class to design the rules which defined how we would live together for the year, tried to allow students some autonomy in making decisions about their class work, and tried to value the children as human beings. There was such a fit between my philosophy and that of CDP that I wished I had my own classroom again.

At the same time, I wondered how I would be able to help colleagues with a very different personal and professional philosophy implement CDP. How would I explain what this program entailed beyond doing some unity builders with students and using the literature lessons that accompanied

the literature based reading portion of CDP? Would teachers who had been trained in Cooperative Learning see and agree with CDP's version which did not assign roles to students, was not competitive, or based on accumulating points? More importantly, would staff understand that the CDP model was a framework for a way of thinking, acting, and being in a school community? It provided a lens for looking at actions taken in schools and a filter for making decisions. This was not something that was going to take place overnight. In order for CDP to be implemented, we would have to embark on systemic change. This would require more than tinkering around the edges of what we did in schools. As I realized the depth of what needed to happen, I wondered how many of my colleagues participating in this initial training had come to a similar conclusion. Personally, I was not anxious to bring my thinking to the attention of the group! The very idea of trying to bring about this kind of major change while our schools were engaged in other reforms was just too scary to contemplate.

When I talked with my colleagues that first summer, we thought about each component of the program: unity builders, literature lessons (including read-alouds and partner reads), cooperative learning, home-school activities, buddy classes, class meetings, and developmental discipline. We could safely say we had done some or many of these things at some point in our teaching career. The only exception was developmental discipline, which we did not quite understand. (DSC kept saying it was important but we would learn about it later.) As we tried to connect our learning to how we would explain it to our colleagues at home, we kept returning to the same question about the program. WHAT IS IT? It is a lot of what we already do and yet it is different. SO, WHAT IS IT? HOW DO WE EXPLAIN IT TO OTHERS? I remember taking long walks, having major conversations about this question and ending up with serious headaches!

For me, as a staff developer, there were several underlying issues:

a) if staff members think they already have a caring community and do the things advocated by CDP, there is no need to change or even examine what they do;

b) if staff acknowledges the need for a caring community but disagrees with CDP's methods for organizing one, how can they become engaged in trying the program; and

c) if staff members do not see the connection between building community and advancing the academic, social and ethical development of students, how can they be helped to consider another perspective.

The final issue for me was how to help people look beyond the individual parts of the program and consider the larger picture. Educators are used to getting pieces of knowledge in chunks without a framework or a context. Typically innovations are expected to be add-ons and only last until the next fad comes along, so there is no need to consider the big picture and examine the necessity for making major changes.

During 1991-1992, the members of the Implementation Team (the teachers, principals, and other staff who had received summer training) were expected to try CDP in a classroom regularly. In my case, I did not have a class, so I had to team with a classroom teacher. I worked with a third grade teacher who had a social work background and was relatively new to teaching. It was the first time in my career that I had the opportunity to see another teacher teach! It was exciting to have a partner so we could learn the materials and the process together. We talked about the class, learned about CDP, co-planned and co-taught lessons, and worked together weekly for most of the year.

It was a brilliant stroke for DSC to insist that the I Team (Implementation Team) had to experience the materials ourselves before we helped train others. Through our own hands-on involvement, we had a clear sense of some of the struggles, questions, successes and failures our colleagues would encounter. It gave the principals a real feel for what the staff would be experiencing while allowing the teachers to view them as learners. Both teachers and students saw the principals model the need for continuous learning by all members of the school community,

A team of staff developers from California came to the district four times per year for a week each time. They spent time in classrooms observing as we taught lessons and debriefed with us. While continuing to model and teach the components of the program, they also provided us with a safe supportive environment for learning. They spent time helping the I Team build community and prepare to work as co-presenters during the summer when the staff of both schools would have their first opportunity to learn about CDP.

Initially when the staff developers had discussions after viewing a lesson, they did not offer feedback but instead asked how we thought the lesson had gone. This made some teachers very annoyed because they were not used to being asked what they thought about their work. The model teachers typically experienced was one of an administrator with a clipboard observing then telling what had been done right or wrong during the lesson. Many teachers felt the staff deveiopers did not have their act together and didn't know what they were doing. However, I loved this approach. No one had ever asked me what I thought about what I did even though I had lots of information to share. I enjoyed these collegial conversations.

During the first year, the I Team met sporadically between visits from the staff developers. But there were always frenzied meetings just before they came so we could be prepared. We kept logs and the DSC researchers spent time interviewing us by phone between the site visits. Members of the I Team began to know each other as we worked and planned together. Some of the barriers due to job roles began to dissolve. For example, the principals were not automatically invested with authority and allowed to lead the Team. Since we were all learning something new, everyone's voice was important. When we had to co-present with the staff developers in front of our colleagues, we were united in our anxiety. We go to know each other's strengths, weaknesses, and preferences. We struggled to learn how to reach consensus and work collaboratively for the benefit of the community. Since the members of the I Team were bright, talented, outspoken people who were leaders in various environments, there were many differences of opinion, lively conversations, and issues that had to be worked out. There were different personalities and styles of working, in addition to power struggles. We had to learn how to listen to each other respectfully and consider other perspectives.

The I Team was becoming a cohesive group. Although we were still very dependent on the staff developers because they possessed knowledge and skills we were still acquiring, we always questioned what we were being asked to do and tried to find out what was happening in the other five districts implementing the project. As we grew more confident in our learning, we began to suggest changes in how material should be presented to our colleagues. As a group, we were becoming more autonomous and suggesting that the generic plan for all six districts

would not work in White Plains for a variety of reasons. We always had other ideas about how we should do things. The staff developers tried to be flexible and make adjustments. Sometimes we were right about the reaction of our colleagues, but there were instances when they went along with a format we were sure they would reject. Through all of these struggles, the I Team grew professionally and personally. We weren't aware of it then but we were mastering the new ABC's of CDP: autonomy, belonging and competence. We began to seriously examine our practice and talk to each other about it. We deepened our knowledge of CDP by preparing to teach it to our colleagues. This work caused us to improve our presentation skills, increase our teaching strategies and learn to have more patience. We were becoming members of a caring community.

It was important to have members of an outside agency, the staff developers, help us learn and remain focused on the vision of implementing CDP. Although we interacted with the staff developers regularly, we also had visits from the leaders of DSC. They were clear about their mission and vision and encouraged us to keep moving forward. They also served as intermediaries with the Leadership Team (L Team). The superintendent, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, a representative from the teacher union, and the district coordinator for CDP served on the L Team. Their job was to provide the resources (funds, time, substitutes, materials) and support needed to make the project a success. They had some knowledge of CDP because they attended three of the ten days of summer training. They stayed connected to CDP through their meetings with the leaders of DSC and the district liaison. The L Team and I Team met infrequently but the I Team often received directives about making a presentation to the Board of Education or making a report about our activities. This caused friction and eventually, the two principals were added to the L Team to help improve communication and promote better understanding between the two teams. The union representative on the L Team often felt out of the loop because meetings were sometimes held during the day and she was unable to get coverage and leave her classroom . She remained on the L Team and joined the I Team because we always met after school and as a teacher, she felt more connected to us.

In the spring of 1992, a retreat was held to prepare for the summer institute. During the summer, the staff of both schools would have their first opportunity to learn about CDP. During the four and one half days,

the I Team would co-present with the staff developers. During the spring retreat, we reviewed the format for the summer, decided which activities we would be responsible for, and role-played our presentations. We had already experienced all of the activities which would be presented so the staff developers modeled the presentations as they reviewed the material with us. As we practiced our parts in front of the group, everyone gave feedback. The thought of trying to teach our colleagues something we weren't entirely sure of was pretty terrifying. We hoped and expected that most would be empathetic but we knew there were some strong resistors who were capable of making it difficult for everyone. Our belief in what we were doing, the strong sense of community within the I Team, and the support of the staff developers gave us the strength to feel we could be successful. Teachers can be a tough audience!

During the first summer institute, we broke several district norms.

- **Never in the history of the district had an entire faculty come together during the summer, let alone two faculties!** Attendance at the institute was voluntary even though teachers had the option of receiving a stipend or inservice credits. The vast majority of both faculties elected to attend the institute.
- **The institute was being led by colleagues with support from an outside agency (DSC).** Usually, workshops were led by outside consultants.
- **Participants were expected to actively participate and contribute to the pool of knowledge each day.** Teachers were exposed to some new information daily and they were asked to examine some of their deeply held beliefs about education, teaching and learning and share their thoughts with colleagues. They were given opportunities to get to know their colleagues as humans outside of their teacher role.
- **As teachers learned CDP content, they also experienced a variety of learning formats and techniques.** There were opportunities to construct knowledge for themselves, they worked in pairs, cooperative groups, individually, and had partner chats. Although there were some lectures, the majority of the time was not spent sitting in a seat listening to a speaker and taking notes. This was not the standard workshop format.

The reaction to the format and the content spanned the continuum. It ranged from outright hostility and refusal to participate to active

participation and enjoyment of almost everything. In between, there was lukewarm participation and enthusiasm for different parts of the workshop. Comments included, "I felt like a professional and enjoyed having the opportunity to think and talk about important educational issues". Someone else wanted to know how teachers would find the time to embrace this new project on top of everything else. Many teachers enjoyed the time spent getting to know their colleagues in a relaxed environment outside the harried structure of the school day. There were those who maintained they did not learn anything new and resented having to give up time in the summer. We all survived and ended the institute with a celebration of the beginning of our CDP journey.

When school began in the fall of 1992, faculty at both schools began to implement CDP. They began using unity builders such as Special Person of the Week. In this activity, each child and the teacher spent a week bringing in artifacts and sharing information about their life with the class. The class members had an opportunity to learn about each other and start to build community. Teachers began to read aloud to their students using books from the literature component. They were encouraged to go slowly but to try some part of CDP. The staff developers continued to spend a week in the district four times during the year. Additionally, the Coordinator of Staff Development and I each worked one day per week in a school. We functioned as on-site CDP staff developers who provided support between the visits from the California staff developers.

One of us was a visible CDP presence in each school. We tried to take care of all the details involved in instituting something new so the teachers would be free to concentrate on trying to learn how to use CDP in their classrooms. We arranged a special section in the Media Center so the literature books and lessons would be easily accessible. We taught lessons, got to know the students, modeled adults learning and working together, co-planned lessons, and encouraged our colleagues to sign up for any specific requests. We listened, prodded, talked, and tried to be very responsive to the needs of our colleagues. When people saw me in the building, they would say, "CDP, it must be Thursday!" It actually got to the point where if I showed up on another day for some other reason, many of the teachers would say to me, "I didn't think today was Thursday". In addition to responding to formal requests written in the CDP notebook in the office, I had lots of informal conversations in the hall, during lunch, in the parking lot, and wherever people happened to see me. Providing

teachers with a highly visible person to contact for help and support was an important part of helping the project to take root.

According to the master design of CDP, all the Implementation Team members were supposed to serve as staff developers and work with colleagues. Teachers who had classroom assignments found this to be an impossible task. They were still learning and making a concentrated effort to try some new techniques in their classrooms. They did not have the time or energy to work with colleagues. Also, they were in the awkward position of being expected to understand, explain, and defend CDP when in fact they were still learners. If the staff was on page one of the CDP manual, the I Team used to joke that we were only one page ahead! It is difficult for teachers to be a prophet in their own land. One teacher describes her experience in this way:

> At the beginning I felt like an outcast. The staff hadn't bought in, even the staff members that I thought would really like CDP. "Here comes the CDP lady again," was the kind of thing I heard about me. People would be complaining and grumbling and suddenly get quiet when I came by.

My experience as a staff developer who was on-site once a week was different. (It is important to note that I had taught successfully in this school for twenty years prior to becoming a staff developer.) I was viewed as a problem solver and someone who could help. I was expected to listen patiently even if people had harsh complaints about the program. In fact, I was supposed to do something about the complaint and carry the message back to the CDP people. I was also recognized and respected for my expertise in a way that would not have been true had I still been a classroom teacher in the school. I expect that there would have been jealousy and resentment expressed by some colleagues. Teaching was viewed as a competitive event, not a collaborative one.

My colleague who worked as the CDP staff developer in the other school had also taught in White Plains for many years but she had been out of the classroom for many years. We were study partners and planned to spend at least one hour each week deepening our knowledge of CDP. It did not work! We spent time together but generally we were comparing notes about lessons we had taught and planning for future lessons. We supported

each other in our roles as staff developers for CDP while we were doing our regular full time jobs. Even though we truly believed in the project's notion of Partner Study and Support (PS&S), we absolutely could not find time to schedule it into our busy lives on a regular basis. We actually set aside dates and times but we often ended up having to cancel our sessions due to other job demands. The other members of the I Team, who had a lot less flexibility in scheduling their time during the school day, found it impossible to have PS&S sessions. Trying to find ways to schedule learning time for the rest of the staff was so frustrating, we just did not deal with it formally for two years. Eventually, in 1994, PS&S was offered for inservice credit. Teachers worked in partnerships all year on their own time. Many teachers took advantage of this opportunity. Also, tenured teachers had the option of participating in the Alternative to Traditional Evaluation. These teachers worked with a partner on a professional growth plan they wrote which delineated how they planned to deepen their CDP knowledge during the year. The principal approved the plan, the teachers documented their work, wrote a summary report and met with the principal at the end of the year.

As teachers began going to the training sessions four times per year, the I Team had to deal with trying to find the least disruptive model for providing coverage for large numbers of teachers simultaneously. The entire professional staff of both K-5 schools received four days of instruction spread throughout the year. This included classroom teachers, special area teachers (art, music, physical ed.), all other teaching specialists (reading, speech, etc.), the social worker and psychologist, and the administrators.

In order to have manageable groups that could actively participate in the learning, the same two grade levels from each school worked together. The specialists were interspersed with the grade levels. For example, all K, 1 teachers and some specialists met for one day. It took three days to reach all teachers. The I Team spent the first day of the week rehearsing and planning for the workshops. At the end of the week, the I Team met again to debrief the week, learn new material, and begin preparing for the next set of workshops. Members of the I Team served as co-presenters on the day their grade level received training.

Each of the four times there was a CDP workshop week, the I Team members had to be out of their classrooms for 2 1/2 days. (The non-

classroom members of the I Team spent 3 full days of that week away from their regular assignments.) In order to provide continuity and the least amount of disruption, we used a modified version of a model I had designed for another training project. The district hired a cadre of substitutes, many of whom were retired district teachers, to serve in the same classrooms for each of the four workshop weeks. (They signed a contract for the year.) Each I Team member with classroom responsibilities was paired with a substitute who provided coverage for all CDP activities during the year. The substitutes were given a 1/2 day training session to inform them about CDP and the big role they would play in the success of the program. Many teachers told their students why they would be out and what they would be learning. Some used the CDP lesson that helps the class think about how to treat a substitute. The use of the same substitutes worked in many instances but it was still extremely difficult to have so many teachers out of the building at the same time. Also, some of the CDP substitutes got long term jobs and were no longer available. The substitutes who had a very teacher directed style, found it difficult to deal with the students as the regular teacher began to alter the way the class operated based on CDP practices.

The classroom teachers who served on the I Team were stretched and stressed, especially during the training weeks. One teacher described it this way:

> If educators are going to be collegial and professional, they must share. But during the school day it's at a serious, serious cost to children. Children suffer. I had 29 days out of my classroom last year. Twenty two of those were on school business and the preponderance of those dealt with CDP. Somehow you have to involve people in meeting times that are not substitute times. You can't be dragging people out of the classroom and expecting them to give their full attention to what is still their most important job: being there for the children. Having the same substitutes is good in theory but in practice doesn't work out.

Issues of time and learning for both children and adults are very complex. Another member of the I Team says:

> Time is another big issue for us. The time that we have to spend in meetings is so much time that we don't have. It's hard on our

> kids and on me when I am out. I missed so many days of school and have been out so much that I'm not where I should be academically. The district pays me to teach and even though the district is behind this most administrators don't have a clue as to what you have to go through to come out of the classroom and to keep the children on a par with where they should be. Often when I'm out of the classroom, I have to spend the whole day getting them back on track. I don't think the administration has a clue to how unsettling it is to teachers to take them out of the classroom.
>
> Doing CDP is like having two full-time jobs. Our planning workshops for CDP often go through 6:00 or 7:00 p.m. Before the workshop we plan for days. It's taken a tremendous amount of time.

Through the years of the district's involvement with CDP, the I Team read the evaluations of our colleagues after each workshop and tried to make adjustments based on the stated needs. During the second year of whole school training, the workshops were held at each school and a variety of formats were tried. Different groups of teachers attended workshops together depending on the subject matter. The I Team told people at the workshops that changes had been made based on their reactions. People commented positively on the importance of being heard.

Despite the various arrangements, the issue of teachers being out of classrooms for learning has not been solved. Teachers feel torn, parents get annoyed, students sometimes feel abandoned, and yet it is important for teachers to continue learning as an integral part of their work. Schools as institutions have yet to progress beyond the notion that teachers are only working if they are in front of students teaching. If a school tries to make systemic change, the matter becomes even more complicated because so many people are involved. People who believe in the change and want it to happen still get frustrated with the amount of time and energy it takes to make change happen while continuing to keep the educational process afloat. Those who do not want change have to be constantly invited in and encouraged to participate because if they are left on the outside, they can undermine the efforts of the rest of the community. One teacher summed it up this way:

> In a schoolwide approach like this the very things that contribute to frustration also contribute to knowledge. For example, some of the resistors took part in workshops, though begrudgingly. The training itself helps bring people together. In a recent workshop we chose focus groups and planned and executed a literature unit. We did it by grade level. "If we plan this, let's do it," I said to my group. I told them I would teach it if no one else wanted to. It was shocking to see the number of people who were surprised by my offer to let people come in. Several teachers came in and engaged in the lesson with me. One colleague who is not a fan of CDP went back to her classroom the next day and taught the same lesson.

Changes have been occurring over the past five years. Teaching assistants have been included in the training for the past two years. They were invited to last year's one day summer institute and for the first time received a stipend just like the teachers. As they've learned more about the philosophy and strategies advocated by CDP, had a chance to talk with each other and examine their beliefs about children, and share the same vocabulary as they teachers, they have begun to deal with students in more sensitive and less confrontational ways. As the teaching assistants have begun to feel more valued as members of the school community, they have also become more active adult learners. They have planned their own program on district staff development days using their own expertise and requesting outside help when needed.

Another major change concerns a principal who acknowledged that her leadership style had changed drastically from authoritarian to more collegial. She also believes her discipline style has changed. Although she was always humanistic, she describes herself as having become more cognizant of behaving as humanely as possible and spending more time dialoguing with students around management issues. She feels teachers are not always comfortable with this approach. By working with CDP over time, she has learned the meaning of patience -- the deepening understanding of teachers and students is a long drawn out process. Both teachers and students have to talk the talk before they can truly internalize the ideas and be able to walk the walk.

The other principal mentioned how CDP had helped her bring about a consistency of approach to discipline within the school. She had always

believed in helping children learn to solve their own problems through dialogue. For children who did not come to school with these skills, they now had an opportunity to learn it through direct instruction.

Developmental discipline was the one aspect of CDP that provoked the most discussion and controversy. There is still struggle about how to implement it, determine if it is working, and what to do when it is not working for certain students. Discipline has always been a topic of concern in schools. What is different now is the fact that faculty members are using a common language and putting issues on the table that previously were not discussed. People assumed everyone shared the same values and attitudes and even when it was obvious that there were different opinions, there was no format or safe environment to bring up the differences for exploration. One teacher very aptly describes this change:

> It has given us a more cohesive perspective on learning and of the children. It has brought together the professional community in the school. The conversations here are different now.

Another teacher reflects on the changes and says:

> CDP is much more of a change than I thought it would be. I recognize all the time how much CDP has changed us. It's not just the structures that have changed us, it's not the new lit. units or the new approaches to teaching, but the whole way we interact with the kids. The biggest change is something that exudes when you walk into the building. It's the climate of the building. It's the way adults interact with each other and the students. We are handling management issues with a lot more time and a lot more words. We are helping children choose alternative behaviors.

Finally, another teacher mentions a conversation she had with a colleague whom she really respected:

> The colleague said she liked the way I did questioning, that it came so naturally. She said, "I wish I could figure out what you're doing that comes so naturally to you." Instead of that praise ending a conversation, as praise often does, it began a conversation. I began to figure out what I was doing and she did to.

This teacher also mentions the many years teachers have been isolated in

their classroom boxes without knowing what anyone else was doing. She feels professional conversations are really important for developing what teachers do in their classrooms.

In thinking about some of the changes that have taken place, it is important to highlight the mechanisms that supported the change. Caring communities of learners that enhance the intellectual, ethical and social development have been developed in George Washington and Ridgeway for the following main reasons:

- CDP offers a strong, well developed model with an intellectual base and materials for teachers (it is impossible for teachers to develop, learn, and execute an entire program while teaching full time)
- a critical mass of staff agreed to try CDP and the rest agreed not to sabotage efforts
- massive staff development which allowed staff to learn over time in a variety of ways from skilled staff developers
- strong support and leadership provided by the principals
- opportunities for administrators and teachers to learn together and provision for each group to receive continued support separately (ie., offering the Principal's Institute and shadowing for principals with feedback from the staff developers)
- the development of local expertise through the Implementation Team
- district support to provide money, materials, and time for adult learning
- hiring new teachers who can accept the CDP philosophy and providing training for them
- continuing to educate and involve parents so they will be advocates
- offering the summer institutes for staff
- recognition that the presence of a caring community is making positive changes for students and teachers

Just as there are other changes that have taken place in the schools related to the introduction of CDP, there are additional examples of the supports, but they are too numerous to detail at this time.

The issues that have made it most difficult to begin, support, and maintain systemic change in these schools are: time, money, competing interests for teacher's energy, institutionalized structures that do not support adult learning and professional conversations as part of the teacher's daily job, and the necessity for keeping the present model of instruction in place for students while trying to institute a new model. In

addition, there is the need for staff to learn how to talk to each other and build trust. Dealing with resistors is another major problem. The use of standardized test scores as the main means of assessing student progress provides a tension because some of the gains students make through participation in CDP are not measured on standardized tests.

The faculty from both schools are continuing to struggle with the issues named above. The I Team and other staff also worry about how this will stay alive as we begin to focus on different issues and have less connection with DSC. We have begun to make CDP a part of everything we do but it is still difficult, time consuming, and exhausting. How will we keep it in the forefront of what we do and continue to use it as the lens through which we filter everything connected to the schools as changes occur in both the teaching and the administrative staff? We are trying to find ways to spread CDP to the other elementary schools and possibly one campus of the middle school. The more widespread it is, the better chance it has of surviving because the culture of the whole district will begin to change.

Dissemination is a double edged sword. We need to do it in order to survive over the long term but it takes time and energy to provide the necessary staff development. The majority of staff members in the district with the knowledge and expertise to provide the staff development are teaching full time and find it difficult, if not impossible, to share their knowledge with colleagues in their own building. Trying to teach others located at another site is not feasible.

The present members of the I Team have been working together for the past three years and there has been an expressed need to expand and change the Team. As rewarding as this journey has been, several members are ready to become less involved at this level. They are committed to continuing the practice of CDP in their own classrooms but they do not wish to be responsible for further dissemination. They are tired and want to take a break. One of the principals is retiring at the end of the year so it will be interesting to see how CDP continues in that school.

I am still on my CDP journey. In this paper I've tried to provide a glimpse of the changes and struggles that have taken place in two real schools as they worked to create caring communities over the past five years. The journey has not ended but we are in a very different place now.